

Message Text

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51 45

ACTION SAM-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 USIE-00 PRS-01 SS-20

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----- 042122

R 121300Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9451

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NICOSIA 2296

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AEMR CY

SUBJECT: POTENTIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM RE CYPRUS EVACUATION

DEPT PASS TO AMB MCCLOSKEY AND USIA

1. EMBASSY/USIS NICOSIA HAVE GOTTEN SOME NEGATIVE FEEDBACK CONCERNING INCIDENT AT LEDRA PALACE DURING TURKISH INVASION AND SUBSEQUENT AMERICAN EVACUATION. CRITICS, PURPORTEDLY MAINLY U.S. NEWSMEN, ALLEGE THAT EMBASSY DID NOTHING TO EVACUATE AMERICANS FROM BESIEGED LEDRA DURING PREPARATIONS FOR AMERICAN EVACUATION.

2. FACTS AS WE SEE THEM ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) ON JULY 18 (BETWEEN COUP AND INVASION) EMBOFFS VISITED ALL MAJOR HOTELS IN NICOSIA, KYRENIA, FAMAGUSTA AND LIMAS-SOL TO LOCATE/CONTACT AMERICAN CITIZENS. AMCITS WHO WERE AVAILABLE AT TIME OF VISIT (ROUGHLY 40 PERCENT OF THOSE REGISTERED) WERE ORALLY ADVISED TO LEAVE CYPRUS WHILE TRAVEL POSSIBLE AND MANY DID. NAMES AND LOCATIONS WERE TAKEN

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FOR THOSE WHO STAYED AND THEY WERE GIVEN LIST OF EMERGENCY

INSTRUCTIONS. THIS WAS DONE AT LEDRA PALACE AS WELL, THE FAVORITE HOTEL FOR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS.

B) ON EVENING OF INVASION (JULY 20), EMBASSY FINALIZED PLANS FOR EVACUATION BEGINNING 1100 HRS JULY 21. KNOWING OF AMERICANS AT LEDRA, RSO MULVEY TELEPHONED AND ASKED TO SPEAK TO ANY AMERICAN PRESENT. MAN ANSWERING IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS DUSKO DODER, WASHINGTON POST. RSO INFORMED HIM OF EVAC PLANS AND ASKED HIM TO GATHER AMERICANS AND ASCERTAIN WHO WANTED TO BE MOVED TO SAFER HILTON OR AMERICAN HOMES NEARER EMBASSY. DODER TOLD HIM (WITHOUT CONSULTATION OR HESITATION) THAT ONLY AMERICANS IN HOTEL WERE CORRESPONDENTS WHO WERE MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING THEIR STORIES OUT THAN IN LEAVING. HE REPEATED THIS. RSO REPLIED HE WAS UNABLE ASSIST WITH FILING FACILITIES AND DODER REPEATED NO ONE WANTED TO LEAVE. THIS WAS REPORTED TO AMBASSADOR BY MULVEY AT 1900 HOURS.

C) ON MORNING JULY 21 WHILE AMCITS WERE BEGINNING ARRIVE AT EMBASSY EVAC POINT, EMBASSY RECEIVED REPORT THAT CYPRIOT NATIONAL GUARD HAD MOVED FIRING POSITIONS INTO LEDRA AND WERE REFUSING TO LET FOREIGN NATIONALS LEAVE. EMBOFF IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONED CYPRIOT FONMIN TO PROTEST. FONMIN AGREED TO CONTACTING AND HE PHONED BACK SHORTLY TO SAY THAT NG COMMANDER AT LEDRA HAD AGREED TO LET AMERICANS LEAVE HOTEL AND WOULD ALLOW OTHER GROUPS FOREIGN NATIONALS LEAVE BUT ONLY AS THEIR RESPECTIVE EMBASSIES REQUESTED PERMISSION FROM FONMIN. WE IMMEDIATELY INFORMED BRITISH HICOM OF THIS WHICH IN TURN TOLD US THEY WERE READYING ARMED CONVOY TO GO INTO LEDRA AND TAKE OUT ALL FOREIGNERS WHO WISHED TO LEAVE. IN MEANTIME WE UNDERSTAND ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE OVER LEDRA PA SYSTEM SAYING ALL AMERICANS WERE FREE TO LEAVE. ANNOUNCEMENT CAUSED BITTERNESS AMONG NON-AMERICANS AND AMONG AMERICANS WHO BELIEVED EMBASSY SHOULD HAVE SENT TRANSPORTATION AND MARINES TO TAKE THEM OUT.

3. EMBASSY FEELS IT NECESSARY TO POINT OUT THAT WHILE BRITISH WERE GEARED UP AND EQUIPPED WITH ARMED TRANSPORT, THE FOUR OFFICIAL VEHICLES AVAILABLE AT OUR MISSION WERE BEING FILLED WITH EVACUEES POURING INTO EMBASSY. BRITISH-LED CONVOY TO DHEKELIA WAS EXPECTED TO LEAVE MOMENTARILY AND EMBASSY STAFF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAD ITS HANDS FULL READYING 380 EVACUEES ALREADY ARRIVING AND PREPARING DEPART. GIVEN BRITISH WILLINGNESS AND CAPABILITY TO GO INTO VERY DANGEROUS AREA AT LEDRA, WE ASSUMED -- RIGHTLY SO -- THAT AMCITS THERE WERE WELL TAKEN CARE OF. GIVEN OUR LIMITED TRANSPORTATION EMBOFFS HAD EARLIER MADE STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO REACH AND PROVIDE TRANSPORT FOR NEEDIEST ILL OR AGED EVACUEES WHO COULD NOT FIND TRANSPORTATION TO EMBASSY. OTHERS MANAGED TO FIND RIDES WITH FRIENDS OR COMMANDEER TAXIS.

4. FYI EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS MUCH OF FUSS OVER THIS INCIDENT
COMING FROM DODER WHO HAS LESS THAN SHINING REPUTATION IN
CYPRUS, HAVING BEEN ARRESTED AND FINED DURING PAST YEAR FOR
TRYING ILLEGALLY EXPORT ANTIQUITIES. WE ARE NOT ATTEMPTING
CHARACTER ASSASSINATION BUT OUR EXPERIENCE WITH HIM AND

SELECTED FEW OTHER CORRESPONDENTS WHO UNGRACEFULLY AND
REPEATEDLY DEMANDED ALREADY-OVERLOADED EMBASSY COMMUNICATIONS
FACILITIES FOR FILING WAS NOT THE BEST. OUR OWN FEELING
IS THAT THOSE CORRESPONDENTS WHO CHOSE TO STAY IN THE LEDRA
WERE DISGRUNTLED AT EMBASSY REFUSAL FOR FILING ASSISTANCE
BUT WERE UNWILLING TO LEAVE. ONLY WHEN FIGHTING AND NG
BECAME TOUGH WERE THEY ALL ANXIOUS TO LEAVE AND EVEN THEN WERE
THEY UNAWARE OF OUR EFFORTS WITH BRITISH TO ASSIST THEM.
END FYI
DAVIES

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